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 CIA WASHINGTON DC//DDI/OEA//
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 SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
 JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
 DIA WASHINGTON DC//DB-Z//

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DEPT FOR EAP/K, EAP/PD, INR/EAP/K AND INR/IL/P
 TREASURY FOR OASIA/WINGLE
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 STATE PASS USDA ELECTRONICALLY FOR FAS/ITP
 STATE PASS DOL/ILAB SUDHA HALEY
 STATE PASS USTR FOR IVES/WEISEL

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EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

1. What's the Truth about S-e-c-r-e-t CIA Prisons?
 (Hankyoreh Shinmun)
2. North Korean Human Rights Conference should not Fuel
 Inner Conflict within South Korea(Hankook Ilbo)

FEATURES

3. N. Korea Threatens Fresh Boycott of Six-Party Talks
 (Digital Chosun)
4. U.S. Continues Nuclear Strike Exercise against N. Korea
 (OhmyNews)
5. ROK-U.S. Hold Defense Talks in Seoul (Korea Herald)

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6. Report: U.S. President Calls Kim Jong-il a "Tyrant" at APEC Summit (Yonhap News)
7. FTA With ASEAN Benefits Kaesong Products (Korea Times)
8. U.S. will not negotiate on sanctions with criminal regime: Vershbow (Yonhap News)

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo

TWO FORMER SENIOR PROSECUTORS SUSPECTED OF BEING INVOLVED IN LOBBYING ACTIVITIES BY "HEAVYWEIGHT BROKER" YOON

JoongAng Ilbo

"MBC-TV HAS NO CREDIBLE CLAIM AT ALL REGARDING STEM CELL SCIENTIST PROF. HWANG'S RESEARCH;" DONALD KENNEDY, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF SCIENCE, SAYS IN INTERVIEW

Dong-a Ilbo

S-E-C-R-E-T WIRETAPPING TEAM WITHIN NATION'S SPY AGENCY FOUND TO HAVE CONSTANTLY BUGGED SOME 150 OFFICIALS FROM POLITICAL, GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND MEDIA CIRCLES IN 1990s; PROSECUTION GRASPS ALL CONTENTS OF 274 WIRETAPPED TAPES

Hankook Ilbo

ROK ON THE ROAD TO FULL OPENING OF DOMESTIC AGRICULTURAL SECTOR; FTA VIRTUALLY REACHED BETWEEN ROK AND ASEAN

Hankyoreh Shinmun, Segye Ilbo

"POLICE SHOULD NOT BE PLACED ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH PROSECUTION;" JUSTICE MINISTER, PROSECUTOR GENERAL REJECT RULING PARTY'S PLAN TO GIVE POLICE GREATER INVESTIGATIVE POWERS

Seoul Shinmun

EFFECTS OF "ECONOMIC RECOVERY" CAN BE FELT NEXT YEAR; CENTRAL BANK EXPECTS ROK ECONOMY TO GROW 5% IN 2006

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

1. According to presidential diplomatic aide Chong Woo-seong, President Roh Moo-hyun and the heads of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) will sign an ROK-ASEAN free trade agreement (FTA) at the upcoming summit meeting to be held Dec. 13 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He also said that ASEAN member countries are close to an agreement recognizing goods made in the Kaesong Industrial Complex in North Korea as ROK products. (all)
2. Gangwon Province governor Kim Jin-seon, in a forum

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organized by the main opposition GNP yesterday, said that the province is seeking to develop an industrial complex for North Korean workers in its Cheolwon region and that discussions are underway with the North on the matter.

(Chosun, JoongAng)

3. According to a recent survey by the National Assembly, the ROK's public opinion is rapidly becoming conservative. 65 percent of those polled favored the "reduction or suspension" of the ROK's aid to North Korea, as opposed to the 62 percent three years ago that responded they wanted the aid to the North to be "maintained or increased." Furthermore, 85 percent of those polled said that economic development is more important than democracy. (Chosun, Dong-a, Hankook, Seyge, Seoul)
4. The ROK and the U.S. opened the fifth round of the Security Policy Initiative (SPI) meeting yesterday to discuss pending bilateral military issues, including the ROK regaining wartime command of Korean troops from the

U.S. (Hankook)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. According to the Dec. 6 issue of Japan's Asahi Shimbun, President Bush again called North Korean leader Kim Jong-il a "tyrant" when he met with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Nov. 16. (JoongAng, Dong-a, Hankook, Segye)
2. Tokyo named Fumiko Saiga, Japan's ambassador to Norway, as a special human rights envoy on North Korea yesterday to step up efforts to press the North to fully account for its abductions of Japanese citizens. (Chosun, Dong-a)

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

1. What's the Truth about S-e-c-r-e-t CIA Prisons?
(Hankyoreh Shinmun, December 7, 2005, Page 23)

More is being learned about s-e-c-r-e-t prison camps the United States' Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has s-e-c-r-e-t-l-y been operating in places like Eastern Europe. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, traveling in Europe, said "renditions are permissible under international law and are consistent with the responsibilities of those governments to protect their citizens." With European Union pressure for an inquiry mounting, the U.S. has for the first time acknowledged the existence of the s-e-c-r-e-t prisons

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when it had neither confirmed nor denied them up to now.

In addition, there continues to be reports that American intelligence agents have been illegally transporting terror suspects to those s-e-c-r-e-t prisons with, in some cases, the active cooperation and, in others, the tacit approval of some European countries. The United Kingdom as well as Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and other nations permitted CIA flights to the s-e-c-r-e-t prisons using their airspace or allowed flights to land for stopovers. It is surprising that even western European nations that have been critical of American unilateralism have s-e-c-r-e-t arrangements with the American intelligence agency. It is only natural that people in those countries are calling for inquiries into who are responsible for these illegal activities and violations of sovereignty.

The U.S. is trying to turn the situation on its head. Denying that terror suspects are being tortured, Rice has argued that transporting and confining them overseas is a "lawful weapon." It appears the U.S. is trying to take the issue head on, since it had obtained the consent of the nations in question. Once again you get a taste of the logic of strength that relies on unilateralism. It would have to be serious for even American human rights groups to say they are going to file lawsuits against a high-ranking CIA official for violating universal human rights guidelines and domestic American law.

The American double standard regarding human rights and democracy is nothing new. It is an international disgrace that human rights infringements such as illegal arrests, transportation, detention, and torture are being neglected because of the war on terror. The United Nations and other international organizations need to take another look at the universal human rights standards they have long told developing nations to follow.

2. North Korean Human Rights Conference should not Fuel Inner Conflict within South Korea
(Hankook Ilbo, December 7, 2005, Page 31)

Tensions are mounting between liberals and conservatives in our society on the occasion of an international conference on North Korean human rights scheduled for December 8-10. The meeting will bring together about 40 human rights advocacy groups and plenty of human rights activists from around the world, with one of the events being a candlelight vigil attended by about 300,000 people.

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The conference is basically a private event led by conservative civic groups at home and abroad, but obviously has more significance than that as U.S. Ambassador to Seoul Alexander Vershbow and U.S. Special Envoy for North Korean Human Rights Jay Lefkowitz will be in attendance and the event is also partly funded by the U.S. North Korean Human Rights Act. However, some progressive groups in the ROK are strongly denouncing the occasion, saying, "Pro-American conservatives are coming together with distinctive goals of fueling anti-North Korean sentiment in the ROK and destroying the inter-Korean relationship" and planning a discussion session that could be up to the conference in size.

We don't agree with blind criticism of the conference by progressives. It is without a doubt that the North Korean human rights situation is dire, and raising an issue of it and improving the situation there is urgent. But, the focus should be placed on finding real remedies for the problem, not on politicized and ideological approaches to the issue. Legitimate concerns for the North Korean human rights abuses are needed, but the issue definitely requires more than just that.

Progressives, too, would be well-advised not to blindly lash out at those who raise an issue of the North Korean human rights, but has reached a point where they should take the issue seriously. In this sense, it is very meaningful that some progressive human rights groups call for an in-depth discussion on the North Korean human rights with key stakeholders from both Koreas taking part. Instead of fighting over the North Korean human rights issue along the ideological line within South Korea, we should gather together and divide our roles to find practical solutions to improving human rights conditions in North Korea.

FEATURES

3. N. Korea Threatens Fresh Boycott of Six-Party Talks (Digital Chosun, December 7, 2005)

North Korea's state-run media on Tuesday warned that Pyongyang could boycott the Six-Party Talks on its nuclear program after the U.S. refused to meet and discuss sanctions it has imposed on North Korean firms. The North's Rodong Shinmun said Pyongyang cannot take part in the next round of the talks if the sanctions imposed for alleged counterfeiting remain in place.

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But the position was delivered in the form of a commentary, and South Korean officials said it was too early to interpret it as an official boycott.

Earlier, U.S. State Department spokesman Adam Ereli denied a report in Japan's Sankei Shimbun that the North told the U.S. about its decision to boycott the talks unless its chief negotiator discusses the sanctions with his U.S. counterpart Christopher Hill. In the last session of the Six-Party Talks before recessing in November, North Korea demanded a discussion on the sanctions at the talks and was angered when the U.S. refused.

Ereli said Pyongyang simply rejected Washington's proposal to "explain the Patriot Act," meaning the sanctions would remain in place against the companies and a bank in Macau the U.S. says were the main channels for counterfeit U.S. dollars made by the North and other criminal activities. The Japanese daily had said a North Korean UN representative told the State Department of Pyongyang's decision to boycott the talks.

Ereli also said Washington was considering a South Korean proposal for a meeting of chief negotiators from the six countries on Jeju Island before the official talks resume.

4. U.S. Continues Nuclear Strike Exercise against N. Korea (OhmyNews, December 7, 2005; Excerpts)

By Reporter Chung Wook-sik

Washington said in September that it had no intention to attack the North, but it launched a simulated strike in November.

The U.S. was found to have conducted a military drill including defensive and nuclear attacks aimed at a virtual North Korean enemy last month. According to the U.S. Army's internal document obtained by U.S. military expert William Arkin, the U.S. launched a "Vigilant Shield/Global Strike" against a "Northeast Asian country that continues to develop nuclear and missile capabilities" for ten days from November 1-10. The document did not specify the name of the country, but Arkin explained that the drill was a nuclear strike exercise directed against the North.

Prior to this, on September 19, the Bush administration reaffirmed in a Joint Statement of the Fourth Round of the

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Six-Party Talks that "[the U.S.] has no intention to attack or invade North Korea with nuclear or conventional weapons." However, this document confirms that since the adoption of the joint statement, the U.S. has continued to clandestinely stage a nuclear strike exercise aimed at the North, possibly drawing vehement opposition from Pyongyang and questioning Washington's intention.

In particular, now that "CONPLAN 8022," which the Bush administration had refused to confirm or deny, was found to have entered into the operational stage, Pyongyang is expected to express its strong opposition. "CONPLAN 8022" is an operational plan revealed by Arkin through The Washington Post in mid-May, under which the U.S. is allowed to launch a preemptive attack on enemy states developing weapons of mass destruction such as North Korea and Iran.

5. ROK-U.S. Hold Defense Talks in Seoul (Korea Herald, December 7, 2005, Page 2)

The ROK and the U.S. opened high-level security talks in Seoul yesterday to continue discussions over a range of pending issues important to the alliance, including wartime command transfer on Korean armed forces.

A Defense Ministry official said that during the fifth round of the Security Policy Initiative meeting, Korean Assistant Defense Minister for Policy Ahn Kwang-chan and U.S. Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless discussed when Korea will regain wartime command of its troops from the U.S. and the possible shape of the alliance in the future.

6. Report: U.S. President Calls Kim Jong-il a "Tyrant" at APEC Summit (Yonhap News, December 7, 2005)

U.S. President George W. Bush called North Korean leader Kim Jong-il a "tyrant" in a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Busan on November 16 on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun said Tuesday.

Koizumi, however, did not publicly mention the word, which might provoke the reclusive leader of North Korea who had reacted vehemently when Bush and other senior U.S. officials labeled him a tyrant and described the North as an "outpost of tyranny," Hiroshi Hoshi, an Asahi editorial writer, wrote in a column, citing Japanese officials who attended

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the Bush-Koizumi summit.

Bush was quoted as saying that the human rights oppression in North Korea is too severe and that he just called a tyrant a tyrant, despite Kim's disdain of the word.

In early November, North Korea slammed Bush for stigmatizing its leader Kim as a tyrant during a meeting with Brazilian leaders.

"We will never pardon whoever dares speak ill of our supreme leader in any case," a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

If Bush issued such comments, he violated the spirit of the joint statement produced at the Six-Party Talks that calls for "respect for sovereignty" and "peaceful coexistence," the North Korean official said.

[Editors Note: The same story was also reported by the December 7 edition of The Joong-Ang Ilbo under the same headline. The article reports: "On this matter, a Japanese government official predicted, "Now that President Bush clarified his hard-line position, it would be difficult for Prime Minister Koizumi to push for normalization of diplomatic ties with the North before the U.S."]

7. FTA With ASEAN Benefits Kaesong Products (Korea Times, December 7, 2005, Page 4)

By Reporter Ryu Jin

Goods made in the North Korean border city of Kaesong will likely benefit from a free trade agreement (FTA) to be signed between South Korea and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) next year, a senior presidential aide said Tuesday.

"It means that the products made in Kaesong will be treated as 'Made in Korea' in the trade agreement so that they can enjoy such benefits as preferential tariffs," the official said on condition of anonymity. "It is all but certain they will be included in the agreement," said Chung Woo-sung, presidential advisor for foreign policy.

South Korea is expected to sign a "framework agreement" for the FTA with the 10-member regional organization when President Roh Moo-hyun attends the ASEAN+3 summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next week.

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A kind of joint declaration signed between leaders from each side, the framework agreement forms the basic structure of the South Korea-ASEAN FTA, which the two sides have agreed to conclude by 2006, according to diplomatic sources in Seoul.

Comprising various domains such as goods, service, investment, dissolution of trade disputes and basic economic cooperation, the framework agreement is hoped to expedite the country's fourth FTA, following those with Chile, Singapore and the European Free Trade Association.

South Korea and ASEAN have engaged in intense negotiations for an early conclusion since last year with the aim of striking a deal on goods by the first half of next year. But they have differed on the status of the products made in the North Korean border city.

Seoul wanted to see the goods from the Kaesong Industrial Complex, a symbolic site for the inter-Korean economic cooperation, treated the same as those made in South Korea. But ASEAN has been reluctant to grant such an advantage as its goods have to compete with the Kaesong products based on relatively low wages.

"We have gained approval from almost all the countries except a couple of nations which we had no opportunity to persuade," Chung said. "It was all cleared when leaders from the Southeast Asian nations visited Busan for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum last month."

But he added that the status of the Kaesong products would not be specified in the framework agreement. "It will be included in the clause on the place of origin when we sign an agreement on goods, which we expect in the first half of next year."

The official said Roh would propose a project for cooperation in the field of information-technology (IT) during the ASEAN+3 summit, which includes South Korea, China and Japan.

Roh will leave for a nine-day tour to Malaysia and the

Philippines on Thursday. He will make a state visit to Malaysia through Sunday, attend the ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur December 12-14, and then fly to Manila for a two-day visit to the Philippines.

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8. U.S. will not negotiate on sanctions with criminal regime: Vershbow
(Yonhap News, December 7, 2005)

By Lee Chi-dong and Moon Hae-won

SEOUL, Dec. 7 (Yonhap) -- U.S. Ambassador to Seoul Alexander Vershbow said Wednesday that his country would not negotiate on the issue of economic sanctions with North Korea, calling the communist nation a "criminal regime."

He stressed that North Korea is creating an artificial obstacle to progress at the multilateral discussions aimed at dismantling its nuclear weapons program.

"We are ready to negotiate the nuclear issue, but right now it's North Korea creating the artificial obstacle to the progress," he said at a breakfast meeting with a group of senior journalists in Seoul.

He stressed that North Korea is earning a majority of its exports from criminal activities, saying "this is a criminal regime."

He enumerated Pyongyang's illicit activities, including the export of dangerous technologies, narcotics trafficking, money laundering, the counterfeiting of U.S. money and forging links with the Irish Republican Army.

Vershbow even linked North Korea's production of counterfeit U.S. bills with the exploits of the late German dictator Adolf Hitler. During World War II, the Nazis circulated forged British pounds in hopes of provoking a fall of the British currency.

"According to an observer, North Korea is the first regime that has done that since Adolf Hitler," he said.

"This issue of N. Korea's criminal behavior is not new. What is new is that some of the steps we have taken in the last few months including raising our concerns of Macao Delta Asia we succeeded in disrupting some of North Korea's criminal activities and they are feeling some pressure from this," he said.

In September, financial institutions in the U.S. suspended transactions with a Macau-based bank, Banco Delta Asia, after the U.S. Treasury Department accused it of distributing counterfeit U.S. dollars printed in North

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Korea.

Earlier in the year, the U.S. administration froze the assets of entities linked to the spread of weapons of mass destruction, including those connected to North Korea.

The U.S. financial crackdown has emerged as one of the biggest stumbling blocks to the six-way talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions.

Representatives from the U.S., China, Russia, Japan, and the two Koreas held their last Beijing-based talks in November. They agreed to meet again "at the earliest possible date." But the prospects for their early gathering have dimmed following North Korea's rejection of the U.S. offer to give a briefing on the financial sanctions.

North Koreans are demanding that bilateral talks be extended beyond just a simple briefing.

Vershbow reiterated the State Department's position that the financial crackdown is not a political issue but a matter of law enforcement.

"Our enforcement of U.S. law should not be used to hold (up) the six-party talks," he said.

"We cannot remove the sanctions as a political gesture when they (North Koreans) are engaged in dangerous activities," he added.

Touching on Pyongyang's continued pursuit of light-water reactors, the envoy said "whether in the future North Korea will be given a new light water reactor is definitely an open question."

Any related discussion is inappropriate unless North Korea carries out its commitments to dismantling its nuclear program, returning to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and abiding by the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency, he added.

He said that North Korea should be blamed for the almost certain ending of the project by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to build two light-water reactors.

"North Korea's claim that it needs a new light-water reactor is not in fact true because they never generated a single kilowatt of electricity in Yongbyon, only plutonium," he said.

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The KEDO executive board is expected to soon officially announce the end of the US\$4.6 billion project financed by the U.S., Japan, South Korea and the European Union. Only financial and legal issues reportedly remain to be resolved.

As for the controversial cost-sharing for the liquidation of the KEDO project, he said "this is a subject still being discussed, and we understand South Korea's burden."

Of course, there would be a need to receive authorization from the U.S. congress if the U.S. wants to share that burden, he added.

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